

A prisoner released

“When you hold resentment toward another, you are bound to that person or condition by an emotional link that is stronger than steel. Forgiveness is the only way to dissolve that link and get free.” - Catherine Ponder. Forgiveness is a virtue, yet many of us find it hard to forgive others, especially after we have been put through so much pain and suffering.

I once had a best friend whom I went through thick and thin with. I had always helped her when she faced difficulties and thought of her when I had good things to share, but one day, she pretended not to hear me when I called out to her, despite my countless attempts. Her new friend heard me and turned her head back. However, instead of telling my friend that I was calling her, she smirked and wrapped her arm around my friend's shoulder, leading my friend to walk away quickly in a different direction.

Subsequently, not only did my friend stop having lunch with me, she would walk past me as if we were strangers. However, nothing could have been more hurtful than the moment I received my friend's mobile phone message, asking me when my birthday was and saying that it had slipped her mind. The first thing that went through my mind was, “Is she still the girl I had considered my best friend and done so much for?” I simply could not forget that smirk from her friend and the fact that she had given me up over a double-faced person who would always give me evil looks when we met each other in the absence of my friend.

After she had neglected me for a very long time, she suddenly came to look for me one day, asking if I were about to go home. I then realised that her rare “visit” was made because her friends had all left school and she did not want to go home alone. I became quite angry at that moment and told her that I was not a “dumping ground”. To my disappointment, her reply was, “You are

a huge dumping ground.” That marked the end of our relationship, as my senses had finally woken up to acknowledge the fact that she had been a hypocrite all along.

I started to lose trust in others and avoided dwelling too deep into friendships. I became an introvert and hid in a corner alone to have lunch everyday but I soon began to ponder, “Why must I hurt myself even more after what she had done to me? Why should I stop myself from finding a new friend and healing my wounds over time? Would it be wiser if I were to make myself stronger and better than her instead, so that she will regret losing a great friend?” From then on, I picked myself up and strived for better academic results, better company and a better life.

When I saw her in the canteen, I pretended to be in a hearty conversation with my friends, who happened to be sitting at the table beside hers. However, I realised that what I had been doing did not help heal my wounds or untie that knot in my heart. I knew deep down in my heart that I had not let the matter go, as my heart clearly hurt when I saw her having fun with her friends.

This deep wound in my heart could never have been mended if I had not stepped into church that day. The sermon given by the Reverend that day was what really convinced me to forgive and forget. He explained two verses from the Bible as an introduction to his sermon on forgiveness. “Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.” -Ephesians 4:31-32. If Jesus could sacrifice himself and be crucified on the cross to pay for all our sins, even before we were born into this world, I should also be able to forgive the person who betrayed me.

To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover that the prisoner was you.” –Lewis B. Smedes. After I had untied that knot in my heart and brought myself to forgive her, as well as all others who had hurt me, I realised that I

gained freedom emotionally and I was back to my normal self. Now, I find myself stronger than before, after overcoming the emotional pain that others had inflicted on me.

Done by: Hannah Lee

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